

Legislative Update

Transparency in Federal Spending

Many Americans have been outraged in recent years by the abuse of the "earmarking" process, in which Congress directs taxpayer money to specific projects. While Congress has the power of the purse and should be able to ensure that the budget reflects appropriate federal priorities, such as for public health and safety projects like levees and roads or national security, there is no justification for wasteful earmarks such as the "Bridge to Nowhere." And in some cases they have been tied to corruption and bribery. I strongly believe the earmarking process must be transparent, in order to prevent abuses and wasteful spending, and to ensure that Congress is being fiscally responsible. Members of Congress should be held accountable by their fellow lawmakers and by the public for their funding requests.

Leaders of the new majority, however, recently attempted to pass the annual spending measures with massive slush funds that would have been earmarked after the legislation passed the House. That would have kept these decisions away from public view and prevented them from being challenged on the House floor, which I believe was a huge step back from the transparency reform enacted several months before. Fortunately, this proposal was defeated and an agreement was reached requiring all earmarks to be made public before they are approved by Congress. This was a victory for open government, fiscal responsibility, and American taxpayers. [Read more](#)

Combating Drugs on Federal Lands

Drug trafficking and production in our national forests and parks is a major problem in Northern California's federal lands. In fact, three of our nation's eight worst national forests in terms of marijuana production are the Shasta-Trinity, the Klamath, and the Mendocino National Forests, which are in our district. There is also a very serious problem at the Whiskeytown National Recreation Area where illegal marijuana grows have been discovered within a few hundred yards of popular boating and fishing areas. Further, some people have been shot at while visiting these areas.

This situation is simply outrageous. Northern Californians who work in the national forest or national parks, or those who visit our public lands to hunt, fish, hike, and camp, must be protected from this menace. Federal, state, and local law enforcement have made some progress in combating the problem, but more needs to be done. To that point, the House recently passed the annual [Interior Appropriations bill](#) --which provides funding to the National Park Service, Forest Service, and other federal agencies and programs--that would bolster law enforcement's efforts to rout out foreign drug trafficking organizations that currently have a safe haven in federal lands. I led an effort on the House floor to bring greater attention to this problem in Congress and to help ensure that law enforcement resources go to where the problem is most prevalent, such as Northern California.

[Learn more about my efforts](#)

Redding Veterans Home Update

Northern Californian veterans very much need and deserve a new veterans home. That is why I'm pleased the House recently passed [legislation](#) that includes \$165 million in funding for a federal-state partnership program that is critical to ensuring the Redding Veterans Home moves forward on schedule. I will work to make sure this funding level remains throughout the rest of the legislative process.

[Read more](#)

Border Fence Mandate Gutted

This month the House passed a [homeland security spending bill](#) that fails to fully fund border security and that places unreasonable restrictions on funding for the border fence. The bill's requirement that the Department of Homeland Security must "make every effort" to minimize the fence's impact on wildlife is an invitation to a never-ending stream of lawsuits by radical environmental groups. The American people have made it clear that they want Congress to get serious about border security.

[Read more](#)

3 Percent Withholding Repeal Legislation

In 2006, members of the U.S. Senate, over the objections of House negotiators, included a little noticed provision in a larger tax bill that, if not repealed, will cause great harm to small businesses and local governments. The good news is that the House succeeded in delaying its implementation until 2011. I am working in a bipartisan manner to repeal it altogether.

Under the Senate-sponsored provision, in 2011 governments at the local, state and federal level will be required to withhold three-percent on payments for goods and services. Whether you're a contractor hired to construct a new school building, a painter painting city hall, the owner of a waste removal company, a farmer receiving a commodity payment or a for-profit hospital receiving reimbursement from Medicare for health services, 3% withholding will affect the way you're paid. This unwise provision will increase the already high burden of paying taxes for everyone who does business with a government, and will impose a sweeping and unfunded mandate on local and state governments. Withholding 3 percent of gross payments could strip cash flows needed for daily business operations, forcing companies to alter business models and pricing when dealing with government customers. Governments would need to retool accounts payable systems to implement the new law, adding administrative costs that are ultimately paid by taxpayers.



For this reason I have joined with Rep. Kendrick Meek of Florida to introduce [legislation](#) to repeal the three-percent withholding burden before it takes effect. Our legislation has been gaining steam in Congress and already has over 170 cosponsors. We recently held a press conference at the U.S. Capitol with grassroots leaders to rally support for our legislation, and to thank supporters in the House and Senate. Working together I am hopeful we will be able to fix this law before it begins to affect governments and businesses in 2011.

[Read more](#)

"Fairness Doctrine" Undermines Free Speech

In recent weeks, several members of Congress have proposed reinstating the so-called "Fairness Doctrine" for broadcast radio and television. The Fairness Doctrine, which was abolished by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) in 1985, required broadcasters to give "equal time" to opposing views in political discourse. Of course, bureaucrats in Washington, D.C., would be in charge of deciding what constitutes "equal time" and "fairness." Supporters of the Fairness Doctrine have openly acknowledged that their aim is to muzzle the voices of their political opponents on AM radio programs.

Today, we live in a world with an astonishing diversity of news sources, especially with the emergence of blogs and other Internet media. There is simply no reason for the federal government to regulate free speech in the interest of arbitrary standards of fairness. On June 28, I and 308 other members of the House of Representatives [voted](#) to prohibit the FCC from reviving the Fairness Doctrine. I am pleased that an overwhelming bipartisan majority in the House has expressed commitment to preserving Americans' fundamental right to freedom of speech.

[Share your thoughts](#)

Pending Legislation and Issues Important to Northern CA

Senate Immigration Bill Update

The Senate has voted to effectively kill the deeply flawed immigration measure they have been considering over the past few months. Only 46 senators voted to proceed with consideration of the legislation. It's clear that senators listened to the American people, who voiced their strong concern that the Senate bill would not secure our borders or stop future illegal immigration. I believe we need to enforce our current immigration laws and construct the border fence that Congress mandated last year. I will also continue to support an effective temporary legal worker program, along the lines of the Bracero program in the 1950s, whereby farmers can obtain workers who would come into our country legally to work and then return to their homeland. Americans deserve a government that is responsive to their concerns about the state of emergency on our nation's borders. [Share your thoughts](#)

Lake Tahoe Fire Serves As Reminder

South Lake Tahoe's "Angora Fire" serves as a grim reminder of the need to actively manage our national forests to protect communities and forests from the devastating effects of catastrophic wildfire. Thankfully, no lives were lost, but upwards of 250 South Lake Tahoe residences were destroyed. Considering the unnaturally dense conditions of nearby forests and steep mountain landscape, the damage could have been much worse. Well-timed calm weather and quick action by brave firefighters helped contain the Angora Fire before it grew completely out of control.

Many residents throughout Northern California are understandably concerned that their community could soon fall victim to the next "Angora Fire." Forest stands located in the Sierra Nevada and Cascade mountain ranges are as much as ten times denser than they were historically. Such unnaturally heavy fuel loads have primed this area for large and destructive wildfires. [Forest conditions are so bad](#) that the Siskiyou County Board of Supervisors recently called for "immediate and accelerated efforts" to thin out unhealthy forest stands in order to protect at risk communities and watersheds within their jurisdiction. Trinity County has taken a similar action.

When catastrophic fires burn everyone loses. Entire communities can be destroyed, forested streams and landscape altered forever, and recreation opportunities can be lost. I've long believed that we need to allow forest professionals to strategically thin unhealthy stands in order to reduce the modern wildfire threat and thereby protect people and forest resources. The [Herger-Feinstein Quincy Library Group Forest Recovery Act of 1998](#) is one example of locally-led cooperative action to protect people and restore forests to a more natural and healthy condition through targeted thinning. If similar action is not taken elsewhere throughout our state, I'm afraid we will continue to see more "Angora Fires."

[Share your thoughts](#)



[Additional Information](#) [View](#)



Chico

Prestige Assisted Living

1351 E Lassen Avenue

3:00 PM - 4:30 PM

AUGUST 8, 2007

Redding

Shasta Senior Nutrition Facility

100 Mercy Oaks Drive

11:30 AM - 1:00 PM

Red Bluff

River Oaks Homeowners Association

350 Gilmore Road

2:30 PM - 4:00 PM